The Black Cat

APRIL 1907

Aunt Liily
Robert H. Langford

The Hired Man's Point of View
Susan Keating Glaspell

The Finding of the Fledgeling
Shannon Birch

A Pair of Dead-Beats
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Juna Papworth

The Mansion of Forgetfulness
Don Mark Lemon

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The Black Cat

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Aunt Liily.*

BY ROBERT H. LANGFORD.

N old, crooked, shrunken, black woman, half bent under a load of "white folk's clo'es," shuffled and plowed her way along through the deep, yellow dust of the big road that led to the River Bottom. The sweat fell from her narrow, wrinkled face in great drops, and she stuck her claw-like hands into the heavy bundle of clothes to keep it from falling off of her head to the ground. She straightened her back but once during the last half mile to her cabin (which stood in the edge of the Great Cane Brake), and looked keenly ahead down the road. "De Gawd know, I know widout lookin'," she said fiercely, under her breath.

Then she shifted her eyes back from the distance, where a buzzard sailed high against the cloudless sky, and only the broken branches of a dead tree arose from the alders and sumac in the fence corners and showed white and flat against the still sky.

She plodded on, never raising her head again, but she muttered strangely and menacingly, and a quiver shot through her and she drew her breath shudderingly as she passed across the shadow cast by the dead tree. A long time ago — years before —

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she had followed a body of men, a grim, silent, terrible, masked band of Ku Klux, down the big road to this tree and had, alternately, shrieked her prayers and curses, while they hanged by his long, yellow neck the only child she had ever had. The boy had borne an unmistakable stamp — he was tall and well-featured, quick to think and to act, rebellious and devilish in both. But the mother love was all the deeper and more vehement because of what she alone knew — his pitiable beginning, and his ruthless, well-nigh inevitable ending. Therefore she had grown to hate the ruling race with a passion almost demoniacal in its bitter intensity.

When she at last reached the shade of the beech tree that stood in her cleanly swept yard, and had sucked long from the gourd of cold water from her well — that was also beneath the tree — she sat down on a bench, almost spent, too tired to open the bank of smouldering embers beside a half-log at the corner of the cabin and cook a corn-pone and "brile a strip o' middlin'." She had not tasted food since early morning, either. Miss "Cath'ern" had offered her a plate of tempting food, at noon that day in town, but she had gruffly refused — for she had not accepted, in years and years, bite or sup or favor from anybody. She was thrifty, she worked hard, and she paid her way independently.

When she had been sitting on the bench a while she turned around and looked furtively toward the Cane Brake that grew clear up to the garden fence. After a long survey of the thick, lush cane, she seemed to be satisfied. Then she looked quickly up and down the road, untied the faded red turban on her head, and extracted several small pieces of money from the closely folded rim. These she counted, again and again, and at last, sure that her calculations were correct, untied a second handkerchief from her head, a black silk one that had belonged to her son, — one that she always wore under the red turban. It was curiously quilted and stitched until it was stiff with coins — a few of them gold — the accumulation of years of her hard earnings and rigid self-denial. She added the money she had just counted, and taking a threaded needle from her hair, sewed it into the handkerchief securely. Then she tied both handkerchiefs back on her head, turban fashion, as they were before.

Taking up a slip of green cane she leaned forward and began to scratch on the hard ground in front of her. After a while the scratches took the form of a rude obelisk.

"Dat's 'bout de way ole Moster's is—en dat's 'bout de way I'm gwine hab his'n. Jes' as big, an' jes' as white — an' ebbery bit as gran' lookin' — cas'n, cas'n, 'fo' de Gawd dat know it oughter be!"

For years and years all her life interest had centered around what she had at last accomplished — the accumulation of enough money to place at the head of the lone, shunned grave back in the little clearing, that bordered the road-side above her cabin, a tombstone that should be in every way the counterpart of her "ole Moster's," Judge Jacob Morton. Aunt Lilly sat there and furrowed the earth with her cane until the sun was sinking down below the tall trees of the Swamp behind her, and the air was becoming heavy with the odors of the marsh blooms and vegetation — mingled with the scent of cypress burning somewhere across the lake.

Slim, long-tailed, half-wild chickens crept through the cane into the garden and flew up amongst the branches of the peach and plum trees to roost. A motherly looking old hen, with week-old chickens, slipped cautiously into the yard, eyeing the old woman furtively, and, with low clucks of warning, called her little brood under a big old iron wash-pot, that, having a piece broken out of its side, had been inverted and had done duty as a hovel for generation after generation of the motherly old hen's chickens — chickens that she had seen snatched from under the stanch hovel, and, with feet tied and scrawny necks stretched head downward, carried off down the yellow, dusty road to the market for early broilers. Thus the old woman had added by slow degrees to the fund in the curiously stitched handkerchief. Trudging back and forth, back and forth, with indomitable persistence, laden with chickens, or carrying pail after pail of luscious blackberries from the Swamp — or a market basket filled with old-timey gingercakes on one arm and her demijohn full of sweet cider swinging from the other—to be sold from the court-house steps on "First Monday."

In winter, the pails held lye, hominy, and various toothsome

things, made out of the fat, mast-fed hogs of hers that lived in the Bottom. Countless were the pones of corn-lightbread she had baked and shoats she had barbecued, for the hack loads of boys who came out to the River on Saturday afternoon with cases of beer. Many were the bundles of clothes she had brought the three miles from town — miles that of late years had seemed to grow longer and wearier of progress — and had carried back in a long split basket, white as snow, sweet-smelling, creaseless, except for the dainty crimping of the ruffles that only old-fashioned darkies cling to and new-fashioned ones turn up their noses at as waste of time.

And now it was ended — this labor of love for the memory of the child she had loved with a proud, worshipful love. No need for the smoke to curl steadily heavenward from the stick-and-dirt chimney when snow covered the ground, or to float slowly out over the thick-leaved swamp when summer-time came again. Her work was finished — her hour of triumph was at hand. Before sun-up tomorrow she would be on her way to the town, where already, in the rear of a small shop, crowded with blocks of marble and finished and unfinished grave-stones, there towered above the rest, gleaming, white and beautiful, one bearing the name "Freeman (was he not born out of slavery?) Morton."

"When dey rides by, gwine on down de big road, en sees *dat* — den dey'll know how my Freem' was lubbed by his ole Mammy."

She closed her eyes and leaned her turbaned head back against the smooth, splotched bark of the beech tree. She was living over again, as she had done many times, the deep joy of satisfaction that follows the accomplishment of something that would have dismayed and discouraged a soul less brave.

A red-and-white spotted cow came up the road from the Bottom and stood patiently outside the gate, rattling her bell now and then as she threw her head backward to lick a thorn wound on her flank. But the old woman gazed unseeingly out, across and beyond the clearing, where the lone grave was — pride and triumph possessing the lineaments of her face. She moved her hands in quick, decisive gestures, and her lips moved, now and then, convulsively.

So intent was she that she did not see, or seeing, did not heed, the man — scarce more than a boy — who vaulted the rail fence and, rapidly crossing the clearing, ran towards the cabin, excitement in every movement. He came around the corner of the cabin before her gestures ceased. Then she became as rigid as a part of her rude bench. "Hell's to pay!" he said, roughly, a weak, drunken smile fixing itself on his white, dissipated face.

"Cap" Morton, scapegoat — with all that the name implies — drunkard, gambler, and worse — the grandson of old Judge Morton, the last of an old and wealthy family, a boy who had, to use vernacular, "th'owed hisse'f away" — was the only human being who demanded friendship of Aunt Liily. Her bitterness had not inspired him with fear when she had nursed him through his babyhood. He clung to her regardless, and all along the way he had confided his childish, boyish troubles and the devilment of his later years, to her irresponsive ear; never knowing, caring, or perhaps noticing, whether she condemned or sympathized. Time and time again he had fled to her cabin when parental doors were closed, and she had nursed him, stolidly — undoubtedly unwillingly — through certain sprees that had grown to be periodical.

"For God's sake, Mam' Liily," he commanded, *"get up!* Help me to hide — they'll be after me any minute! — I've — I've," he raised his arm to the side of the cabin door as he went inside, and bowed his head against it, "Good God! I've shot a woman — and killed her!"

The old negress got up and followed him into the cabin. He put his hand on the foot of a bed — seeking a hiding place — and then, wheeling suddenly, he went to the fireplace and, holding to the rude mantelpiece, set his foot firmly in a niche, where a brick was missing and pulled himself up until he could slip his fingers over a loose board in the ceiling, pushing it aside, and then, quickly moving several others, he climbed into the loft.

"Give me a quilt and a pillow — they'll never think about looking up here! Remember the time Freem' set me up here, when me and Pomp were playing hiding? Pompey never did find me."

An expression of pain shot over the old woman's face at the careless mention of her son. She handed him the quilt and pillow

— but when she stepped down out of the chair and mechanically pushed it back against the wall there was a look of hatred on her face, so terrible, so intense, that her features were livid. She went to the door and stood, for a long time, looking out toward the grave in the clearing. Finally the man recalled her.

"Mam' hurry up and fix me something to eat — and a cup of good strong coffee. Had nothing since last night!"

As the sun went down and the cypress knots blazed up the old woman moved about the fire in the yard, preparing supper. There was something indefinable in her manner — something akin to the fierce, tense control of the cat species, when about to spring — or the smooth glide of a deadly snake in ambush. Now and then she looked down the road, and strained her ear to listen. Once she went to the gate and leaned far over, looking beyond the alders and sumac in the fence corners, to catch a glimpse of the black outline of the dead tree which stood between her and the last streak of light in the west. Then her fingers clenched nervously, and a fiendish, malicious smile relaxed her face. She trod softly — once more — back and forth between the cabin and the fire in the yard — only a flapping sole of her worn-out shoes disturbing the silence. After a while she said to the boy in the loft:

"Supper's raidy — ye might as well come on down en eat — don't seem lak dey's comin' dis way or dey'd done been heah! I'll watch at de gate."

"Good thing for me there aren't any Ku Klux these days, Mam'," Cap Morton said, stretching himself as he stepped out into the yard. "Woods be full of them by now! Po' old Freem' didn't have much show, did he? They'll never take *me* alive!"

A sharp spasm crossed the worn old face at the gate, as she turned from her post to look at the speaker.

His long young body curved like a lithe willow switch as he bent over the table and ravenously devoured the appetizing food. The silhouette of a beautiful profile, a well-shaped brow — a fine, straight nose — short upper lip and strong chin stood out in relief against the flaring cypress knots behind him. She watched him with intense concentration — the quick, nervous movements of his slim hands as he passed them about the table — the long stretch of his legs under the table — the peculiarly graceful turn

of his arched foot. For a long time she watched him as he ate. Then she bowed her head on the gate, listening intently. Yes — unmistakably — she heard the sound of horses coming — coming — in the distance. They were coming swiftly, too!

A thrill shot through her! With vicious realism she foresaw the brutal scene that the next half-hour would bring.

Suddenly the boy, straightening his body, threw his chin up and addressed her. She did not hear what he said. In a maze she gazed, bewildered by the overwhelming emotion that that quick movement of the figure and toss of the chin brought to her. It was an odd trick that the Morton family had possessed.

Ah, the familiarity of the loved gesture, and what it recalled to her! Vividly she remembered the same tense stiffening of the long, lithe body—the same imperious tilt of the chin—of her own son, when he dropped lightly from the leafy branches of that same beech tree in answer to the call: "No use, Freem', we know you're up there," and, with oath for oath, had faced undaunted, to the last, the hideous, masked band of Ku Klux that filled the cleanly-swept yard and surrounded the cabin. The remembrance beat on her brain that "Cap" Morton's father had (with trembling eagerness — a vent to his long pent-up hate) slipped the noose about her son's neck!

With a sickening gasp for breath, she wavered, and then, throwing up her hands in warning, she slid to the side of the boy, who bounded from the table: "Unc' Dan!" she said.

In a few seconds they had disappeared in the thick, green cane that bordered the garden fence and that grew a tangled, well-nigh impenetrable brake for miles and miles up and down the river.

"Uncle Dan" — a name that sent uncontrollable terror to the hearts of children, white and black, — was an old hermit, a hoodoo, a witch, a half-savage, half-human creature, who dwelt— no white man knew where, nor for how long, somewhere in the cane-brake — or in the swamp beyond — or somewhere up or down the river — and whose cunning wisdom and lore of woods could foil man or beast, and to whose care before sun-up, Aunt Liily, winding slowly, patiently, in and out along hidden paths— had entrusted her charge!

When she came home about dawn the chickens were fluttering

in a preparatory way amongst the peach and plum trees. The cabin door was ajar, the table, the food just as she had left it. The outer gate was closed. Poking up the smouldering embers she sat down on the bench and placed her feet close to the live coals, to dry.

"Don' look lak nobody been heah," she said, wearily, "Wonder if dat was Mist' Geawge Estes gwine fox huntin' las' night?"

Later on, the chickens flew down, and, slipping through the garden paling, shied around and around the table, until finally, the boldest flew up and, snatching a piece of bread, ran squawking away, followed by the rest of the hungry brood.

Emmet Carter, the sheriff, with several deputies, came on down the road, and passed under the dead tree, where, from the topmost branches, a hawk perched and silently watched the broken iron pot, where the old hen still hovered over her chicks.

"Don't see why we didn't think of coming here first," said the sheriff, as he sprang from his horse, and went into the yard. "Bet it's right where 'Cap' is —or was!"

The sun was above the rank growth of the swamp by that time and the first rays, stealing underneath the low branches of the beech tree, fell on Aunt Liily's face.

The faded red turban had slipped down across her shoulders. The curiously stitched and quilted handkerchief she had, tremblingly, stuffed in the pocket of the fugitive when she left him at Uncle Dan's camp. Her white, woolly hair was in strange contrast to her small, shrivelled black face — a face that looked like some curious ebony image, carved in fine lines — a masterpiece from a hand that had wrought with marvellous, divine skill, his conception of Love and Compassion — the powerful beauty of which God himself had enhanced by setting a seal — His greatest, one that is bestowed on the soul that, suffering cruelest wrong and bitterest injustice, is still great enough to forgive — His seal of Peace!

Emmet Carter instinctively took off his hat as he looked down.

The Hired Man's Point of View.*

BY SUSAN KEATING GLASPELL.

THE new hired man was a struggling soul who insisted upon living up to the best and highest that was in him. He cultivated the place by day and the minds of the family by night. The former he irrigated with water and the latter with New Thought. It was assumed early in the acquaintance that he was from Boston, but he himself, with a fine fearlessness one could not but admire, confessed to Boise.

He had come to Lone Prairie through a soulful desire to get nearer to nature. He said it had never been intended man should spend his days in the feverish market-place. Elizabeth, who giggled and was in many ways impossible, said she did not believe one could catch much of a fever in Boise, but the new hired man exercised a beautiful tolerance toward his inferiors. That they were his inferiors they soon came to understand.

His name was Horatio Mackintosh. His clothes were passé and his eye large and wonderful. He was a mechanic by trade and a mystic by soul. He had a way of casting down his knife and fork at unexpected moments and crying out — "Beautiful! Beautiful!" At first they thought he referred to the food, but experience taught them the explosive was caused by things mental rather than things gastronomic.

As the Brown family had never before had a hired man, and as the hired man had never before had a family, they underwent, hand in hand, as he would have put it, the delicate experience of adjusting themselves to one another. The Browns had turned their backs on Chicago, and their faces toward Idaho, because Mr. Brown had a bad cough and it seemed that life as a shipping clerk would be, for him, a very uncertain life. They were a jolly

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sort of family, and their new existence had seemed a good deal like a prolonged picnic until one day Horatio Mackintosh stopped at the door and said he would work for them. They were not at all sure they wanted any one to work for them, but Horatio, so Tom said afterwards, hit them with a thought wave, and stayed. His arrival took place — that is advisedly put — at two o'clock in the afternoon. He spent the remainder of the day interviewing his soul in order to ascertain whether it would be willing to take up permanent residence there. To do this he sat silently upon the back porch for three consecutive hours. Then he walked into the house and said, with the solemnity of a great deliverance: "The atmosphere is right. I have obtained a consent."

Now the Browns were mere Presbyterians, and as to literature, read only the big sellers and the popular magazines. However, Elizabeth had spent one quarter at the University of Chicago, and she had a faint recollection of having heard something about consent. So she translated the new hired man in this wise: "He thinks we're all right. He's going to stay right with us."

In Chicago the Browns had known the luxury of one small maid, and this one small maid had never partaken of her daily bread at the same time and place as did the family she served. Going upon the erroneous theory that a hired man in Idaho is the same as a maid in Chicago, Mrs. Brown that night blunderingly put down the usual number of plates. But just before the evening meal was served Mr. Mackintosh, following either the call of his soul or the odor of well-done sage chicken, walked into the dining room, pulled back his chair, adjusted his napkin, took up his knife and fork, and leaning sadly upon the table, his eyes hitting a far distance, said with a tender melancholy: "Yes — ah yes, we must make concessions." Mrs. Brown shamefacedly smuggled in another plate, and in the kitchen ensued a heated discussion as to what concessions were referred to. Elizabeth thought it was the concession of the soul to the body, but Tom held that it was the concession of Mr. Mackintosh to the Browns. To the end of days they had the satisfaction of their own conclusions, for Horatio never explained himself. He paid you the compliment of free expression, and if you were unworthy he did not seek to humiliate you with explanations.

Tom, who was much interested in getting the ranch in full swing, thought it would be fitting that evening to talk a little with the new hired man about starting in in the morning to break some more of the land. He was about to say: "I guess you and I will do some breaking in the morning," when the hired man, reaching out a long, lean arm to the west, said in fervid tones: "Yes — ah — yes, may the after-glow of our lives be as clear and lasting and beautiful." And as Tom put it, "How was a fellow going to butt in on that!"

Indeed, it was evident from the first that the hired man's soul was not to be butted in on. The Browns had heretofore associated souls largely with churches and poems, and that made it a little grewsome to feel they were literally floating around over the dinner table and following one down to the field. Elizabeth said she could stand her soul pretty well during the day, but she hoped it would not get in the habit of following her to bed at night. The day after his arrival the hired man went in to town for his library. This consisted of a large box containing books and pamphlets, all of which seemed to deal with souls and atmosphere and struggle. The idea of struggle appeared to predominate. Tom thought that if the hired man would give his soul a rest once in a while he would make better time in the long run. He — Tom — had been on the track team of the Hyde Park High School and he said that nothing was so bad as overtraining, and he was sure there could be nothing in the world quite as awful as an overtrained soul. But it was impossible to talk to the hired man about this, because, whenever you attempted to say anything which would jar on his soul, he commanded his ears not to listen, and never was as fine team-work seen as that done by the hired man's ears and soul.

He believed that you could have anything you wanted by affirming it. As growth was the most precious thing in the world it was growth he affirmed most frequently. He contended that it helped to affirm verbally, and so every night as he rose to go to bed he said: "I have grown a little today," and every morning when he came down to breakfast he announced: "I grew a little in the night."

The Browns were so far behind him in soul life that their attitude naturally became very apologetic. When evening came the

hired man would get out various pamphlets and books, take from his pocket a note book in which he wrote some of the most precious thoughts, and settle himself down at the big table in the sitting-room. When sure he was not looking the members of the family would produce newspapers, magazines and books, slide into unobtrusive places and assume a hang-dog look of knowing they did not amount to much. Ever and anon the hired man's soul would burst forth — "True — most precious — I affirm it."

Meanwhile, despite the soul essence which floated about the place the wheat continued to grow and prospects for a good crop were very bright. But there was one thing haunted them night and day, and that thing was grasshoppers. The Browns had always supposed that all grasshoppers lived in Kansas, but after taking up their land they learned there were a few floating around in Idaho. However, the Idaho grasshoppers were supposedly intermittent, and this was not their logical year. A young man from an Eastern University had pronounced them degenerate and had predicted that never again would they appear as beings to be feared. But still the Browns worried, for they were not of the soul stuff which makes life a matter of affirming and denying.

For some reason best known to themselves, the grasshoppers overlooked their schedule and suddenly appeared at a ranch just five miles north of the Browns. It was Tom who brought the news, and a very serious-faced Tom was he. "They're headed right for us," he concluded. "We're bound to get them."

Someway no one felt like saying anything just then. The silence might have lasted a long time had there not come from the hired man a slow, weighty: "I — deny — it."

Elizabeth laughed hysterically, and with much emphasis Tom said: "Rot!" adding, with an aggressiveness born of his disappointment: "I guess if you can work that stuff on grasshoppers you've got a steady job for life."

"We've got such a little bit of wheat," mourned Elizabeth. "that I should think they might have the decency to let it alone."

"Don't talk to the old-timers here about decency in a grasshopper," sniffed Tom.

"Well, it's very strange to me," she declared, heatedly, "that these precious old-timers don't know anything to do but just sit

still and let the grasshoppers take their crop! Why don't they get up and do something about it?"

"Nothing to do," replied Tom, with a splendid masculine acceptance of the inevitable.

The hired man turned to leave the room. At the door he paused, faced them, raised his hand, and again in the manner of a judge pronouncing sentence, or of a minister declaring the bond, he said: "I — deny — it."

"Say," said Tom, "isn't he just the daffiest?"

There was gloom that night in the house of Brown. They had not broken a great deal of their ground that first year, for the breaking of ground demands capital, but, as Elizabeth said: "The fact that we haven't much makes what we have just that much more important to us." A neighboring rancher came in during the evening and they had the melancholy pleasure of obtaining much information concerning the methods of grasshoppers. All they learned but served to deepen their hopelessness. It seemed the universal verdict of the old timers on Lone Prairie that there was nothing to be done about it. After the neighbor had departed the family sat there in silence for some time, thinking a good many things they were too plucky to put into words. At last the hired man began gathering up his papers. After he had risen and pushed back his chair he said, each word falling with an individual solemnity: "I — deny — it."

"Why, he forgot to affirm growth," said Elizabeth.

"Yes," said Tom, "he's cutting out growth tonight and using all his soul to deny the grasshoppers. Good of him, isn't it?"

They laughed a little, but the situation was not to be enlivened, even by the hired man's soul.

Elizabeth slept very little that night; the cares of the family were resting heavily upon her. "It isn't fair," she kept saying, "when we need it so badly, and when we've done our part." And over and over again she told herself: "We ought to *do* something!"

She was up early next morning and walked out toward the wheat to see if there were any forerunners of the grasshoppers. She did see some half dozen of them, and her heart sank. "They're coming," she said, a great lump in her throat, "they're probably in Mr. Mason's field now."

And then she heard a strange sound, and turned around. The hired man was standing just behind her. His arms were outstretched, palms upward, and in the manner of a child learning phonetic spelling he was saying: "B-a-c-k!"

Elizabeth laughed a little, cried a little, and ran back to the house. "Well, I don't care," she declared, in telling Tom about it, "it's crazy, I know, but at any rate he's *doing* something. He thinks that's the right thing to do, and he's doing it. And I do think we ought to do something ourselves, and not sit here like mummies and let the grasshoppers rush in and take all we've got!"

"Nothing to do," repeated Tom. "If there is the folks here don't know about it, and we're nothing but city jays, and we certainly can't do anything if they can't. The wheat's not ready to cut, and there you are."

Mr. Mason came over after breakfast to say that his wheat field was so thick with hoppers he did not believe he could get a pin head in between them. "Well, what I'd like to know," blazed Elizabeth, when he had finished, "is how you can sit there and be so mighty calm about it!"

He turned to her in astonishment. "Well — why, what are you going to do?"

"Do? How do I know? But I think it's pretty strange to sit still and let a thing go without any kind of a fight!"

He shook his head. "Ranchin' in a 'hopper country is a good deal of a gamble. I've had a crop for two years — this year I get no crop. You take your chances when you take the land. Oh — we old-timers keep pretty cool about it," he concluded, smiling tolerantly upon her.

"But I think it's outrageous to keep cool about it! I want to do something! Why, I'd do anything — *anything,* rather than do nothing!"

She heard an imperative cough, and turned to see Horatio Mackintosh observing her meaningly. He turned, and walked out on the back porch. After a minute of hesitation she followed.

"Mind rules matter," was his opening sentence.

Elizabeth sat down on a box, determined to hear him out.

"But when a large amount of matter is involved it takes a certain amount of mind to dominate it. You follow me?"

"I — I think so," said Elizabeth, meekly.

"I find, despite my most earnest efforts, that I alone cannot create an atmosphere sufficiently strong to drive back those approaching grasshoppers. If the thought waves denying them — sending them back—were stronger, the grasshoppers would be obstructed as completely as if a mighty iron wall were built from earth to heaven. You get that?" he asked, solicitously.

Elizabeth looked around to make sure no one was within hearing. "Yes," she murmured, "I get it."

"You say you would do anything rather than do nothing. Then, despite your unbelief and ignorance, come out here with me and deny these grasshoppers!"

Elizabeth, struggling with both tears and laughter, could at first find no words. "I — I'm afraid I wouldn't do any good," she said at last. "I — you see, I don't just understand how to use my mind."

"Concentrate all your thought upon sending them back, — say back, think back, feel back. Send out your soul to deny them — let the vibrations which you control go forth against them, and then — when they strike our thought wave they will simply turn and fly the other way! With such an atmosphere as we two can create" — he held up his hand to solemnize the declaration — "the victory is won."

Elizabeth's mental processes were now something like this — It sounds foolish — but how do I know? Lots of people besides him believe it. And there's nothing so foolish as doing nothing when you ought to be doing something, and nobody else knows anything at all to do, so, even if he is foolish, he isn't as foolish as everybody else. And, as the woman in the flat above us said about Christian Science when her baby was dying — "I'm willing to try anything that can't make things any worse."

Anyway, after one long glance across that wheat field, out of which had floated many a dream, Elizabeth went. And when Elizabeth went into a thing she went into it right. She was a courageous maiden, courageous enough to brave even her own ridicule, and she was what Tom called gamey. If she was going to try this thing at all she was going to give it a square deal; if it failed it should not be because she had not done it right. And

so, at cost of never again being able to take herself seriously, she stood as the hired man told her to stand, arms outstretched, palms upward, and in a voice which seemed to come from very deep in her being she breathed, weightily, forcefully — "Back! — Back!"

She soon became so interested in seeing how many thought waves she could send out that she forgot all about being ridiculous. Harder and harder she worked to get the vibrations in motion against the grasshoppers. There were a number of them scattered about just beyond the fence, and the field which they could see a little way ahead was fairly a moving mass. The sight of them added much to her intensity. In the natural course of events, according to Mr. Mason's story, the grasshoppers would be upon them in half an hour. Faster — faster she rolled out the thought waves. "Back — Back!" she breathed, and "Back — Back!" came from the soul of the hired man, her compatriot in the creation of an anti-grasshopper atmosphere.

So completely was her mind used in the denying of the grasshoppers that she never knew anything about the storm until the wind almost took her off her feet. Even then she was hardly conscious that it was wind. It seemed as if other thought waves were being marshalled to their aid, as if some mighty force were pushing them right on to the grasshoppers, — denying them, sending them back. Every bit of her being was concentrated now in the "Back — Back!" and Elizabeth's soul was working at full pressure.

But when the first bit of hail — hail about the size of an unpretentious egg — hit her square in the back of the neck, she forgot all about vibrations and turned around. Then she saw it as it was. A terrible storm had come up. Clouds from all directions were hanging low in the sky, the wind was blowing furiously and the hail was coming faster and faster, bigger and bigger.

And yet Elizabeth did not quite surrender. "Oh, back," she cried — "back!" But the note of the imperative had gone; it was nothing now but a pathetic plea. She looked at the hired man; he had not abated. "Back — Back!" she wailed. But the sobs were coming, — and so was the hail. Thicker and faster it came, until at last, utterly panic-stricken and sick at heart, Elizabeth covered her head with her arms and ran for the house.

Tom was coming after her. "Where — where you been?" he gasped. "It — it's awful."

"I — I—just taking a little walk," screamed Elizabeth. I — I wasn't doing anything at all!"

When the storm abated they looked out on a stricken wheat field. "I'm glad the beastly hoppers didn't get it," said Tom, trying to whistle. "I'd rather be beaten by hail than hoppers."

It was a few minutes later that Elizabeth saw a strange figure coming across the yard. It was Horatio Mackintosh, but a very demolished hired man was he. The wind and hail had done strange things to him.

He came hurrying into the room — Elizabeth was thankful Tom had just left — holding out to her an enthusiastic hand. "A magnificent victory!" he cried, his face glowing, his voice jubilant, — "magnificent!"

"Why, what in the world are you talking about?" demanded Elizabeth.

"Our glorious triumph! Our unqualified success!"

Elizabeth gasped. "Are you crazy, man? Haven't you any sense at all? Look out there at that field! Where does the triumph come in?"

Horatio Mackintosh waved both of his arms with the full abandon of the victor. "The grasshoppers have turned back! There is not one in the field! Most of them have even perished! They have not only turned back — they have died!"

"Well, what if they have?" blazed Elizabeth. "What difference does it make? There isn't any crop for them anyway. I tell you the crop is ruined."

He looked at her then with a pitying tolerance. "My dear young lady," he explained, with the gentle patience of a high soul, "that is quite without bearing on the issue. We did not affirm a crop; we merely denied the grasshoppers." And he turned away murmuring softly — "Wonderful — most precious!"

The Finding of the Fledgeling.*

BY SHANNON BIRCH.

HE camp-fires were dying at intervals along the trail that led up the eastern slope of the mountains, to the pass that hid the restless prospectors from the new-found wealth of Nuggeton, lying in the gulches at the foot of the western slope of the mountains where rose the head-waters of the Fever River.

The bustle of preparation to move forward was going on along the upward trail, and wheeling into the tortuous course was many a covered wagon, whose driver, bent on urging his team to its execrable task of surmounting the insurmountable, forgot for the moment his dreams of wealth.

The wagons, composing the largest camp on the trail, had one by one been driven forward from their camping ground on their journey up the mountain side, except one, whose owner, left alone, mounted his wagon, and, without hesitation, took the trail down the mountain. The train soon discovered his secession, and the leader of the camp rode hastily back and soon overtook the recalcitrant, who failed to give any explanation of his departure. As no camp rule had been broken, he was permitted to move on down the mountain-side, and arrived in the middle of the day at the last camping place next to the one where he had separated from the train. Arriving at this point the traveler unhitched his team, with the evident design of remaining in his location for some length of time.

. . . . . .

Thomas Wickersham had long been a citizen of Grass Valley, in the new country of Kansas, before he began to depart from his customary habits of slumber and dream, time after time, that he was engaged in felling a giant tree whose decayed interior was

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the receptacle of an immense hoard of virgin gold. Beyond the fact that his dream occurred with great persistency, Thomas Wickersham was unable to go in explanation of this phenomenon. His mind had not dwelt on the possession of gold above his neighbors. What surprised him greatly was the photographic likeness of one dream to another, — always the same surroundings, the same landscape, the same mountains, the same ravine, with the same great tree leaning above it, himself sinking his axe deep into the fibres of the tree, its fall, and the pebbly gold that ran from the hollow and spread in a mighty heap upon the ground, — ecstatic possession of illimitable wealth, that vanished with the banishment of sleep.

This having, and then not having, wore on Thomas Wickersham, whose attention, no doubt, was the more deeply engaged in a coincidental matter because of it. This matter was the sudden discovery of gold fields of unusual richness at Aladdin Creek, one of the head-waters of Fever River, west, beyond the mountains.

Thomas Wickersham's auriferous dream must have aroused in him an adventurous spirit, for he was possessed at once with a determination to try his fortunes in the gold-fields, and the expiration of a few short weeks saw him rolling westward in company with other emigrants, in a train of canvas-covered wagons, bound to the Eldorado of Aladdin Creek.

It was Thomas Wickersham who returned to the abandoned camp, because it was the place of his dream, every feature coinciding with its detail. The discovery had been unexpected. Chosen to ride ahead to locate the place selected for the camping ground for the night, Wickersham had suddenly found himself face to face with a place as familiar to him as the country lying around Grass Valley. During the night he determined to move with the train a day's journey up the mountains, beyond the fear of inquisitive companions, and then return to probe the mystery.

The day on which he arrived back, and more than half the following day, were spent in preparing for effective investigation. First the great tree was to be felled, and if no shower of gold came of that, then something else might be done. Having selected his point of attack, he swung his axe, that fell, biting keenly into its

trunk. To contemplate the possibilities before him, he let his hands fall from the axe-helve, that stood stiffly out from the tree, and stepped back a pace.

While regarding the situation in this contemplative spirit, he caught sight of a covered wagon driven down-trail toward his camp. He remained inactive, awaiting the passage of the wagon and its occupant. That did not occur. The wagon, instead, drew in and came to a stand-still. The driver dismounted and approached, glancing curiously at the axe extended from the tree. He greeted Thomas Wickersham, who returned the greeting, and then simply stood waiting.

That the late-comer had some purpose in view not disclosed was clearly evident, but he seemed unable to proceed with the explanation that evidently was expected, the more so as the two men had been members of the same train, bound for Aladdin Creek, the last-comer having fallen in some six days back from the mountains. This last-comer, the elder of the two by several years, seemed greatly embarrassed, but at length said:

"I clearly perceive that you are entitled to the reasons for my appearing here, but I must say that I am at a loss to state them, not so much because they are not clear to me, as by reason of the unexpected appearance here of fulfillment of certain designs by another that I supposed could only possibly be entertained by myself.

"I find that you have proceeded here to the same extent and practically in the same manner I had designed to do, even to your beginning to fell the tree before us. You have preceded me here, and are entitled to the rights of a prior possessor. I will state my case, and we can then decide to what extent it interferes with any claims you may have and desire to retain:

"I am a farmer, as you may conjecture, and my home is at Rapid Jack, in Nebraska. The gold fever that has swept the West found me distracted from my usual routine of duties by the frequent occurrence of a dream that presented each time the same features, never deviating, of a mountain scene, crossed by a ravine in which stood a huge tree, that I felled and found hollow, but filled with gold that flowed out at my feet. In possessing myself of this treasure, I invariably awoke. It must, of

course, be clear to you that the tree you have begun to fell is the tree of my dream."

Thomas Wickersham listened to this revelation with amazement, and it was no sooner concluded than he related his own experience, and it was promptly concluded between them that the search should be conducted jointly.

The team was unhitched and provided for, the elder man drew from his wagon an axe, and the two men approached the tree where the handle of Thomas Wickersham's axe still stood out at right-angles to the trunk. The elder one said:

"I observe by your axe that you chop left-handed; I am a right-handed chopper; I will stand opposite, so we can double-team and strike time-about."

The younger man, assenting, drew out his axe and simply exclaiming, "Chip in!" struck the tree a blow that was followed by a stroke from the other, alternating until a considerable notch was hacked in the trunk of the tree. Then the elder suddenly exclaimed, "Chip!" and followed this by sinking his axe above the notch, so as to chip out between.

The elder at once withdrew his axe as that of the younger sank in the gash, but the younger failed to withdraw his implement,—failed even to attempt to draw it,—and, crashing upon the head of the one in the tree, showering sparks of fire, fell the edge of the descending axe of the elder, who looked quickly up, to be met by an unaccountable look on the face of the younger, who staggered forward, shouted:

"Bob!"

The younger was almost instantly met by the elder, with the joyous cry:

"Tommy!"

. . . . . .

Salathial Wickersham had settled early on the Mississippi Bottom, in Illinois, and had, with the indoor aid and assistance of his spouse, Louisa Ellen, literally hewed a farm from the primeval woods, when Robert and Thomas, their sons, arrived, respectively, at the ages of twenty and seventeen.

Salathiel Wickersham had become a prosperous land-owner, and his family shared with him his prosperity. Louisa Ellen's

hospitality and Salathiel's abundance were famed for miles around. The boys, Robert and Thomas, worked about the farm, and apparently never knew discontent. Much of their labor had been expended on the clearings that from time to time turned the forest into plow-land, and they would attack the largest trees and fell them. Robert chopped with the right hand nearest the axe, while Thomas was left-handed. This arrangement enabled them to "double-team," standing opposite while striking alternate blows, one lifting his axe as the other sunk his in the trunk of the tree.

The boys were inseparable in work and play, although there was a difference of three years in their ages. Robert was slow, like his father — Thomas, independent and impulsive, like his mother, Louisa Ellen, whose baby and ewe-lamb he always was.

It was on a notable September day, as Robert and Thomas were double-teaming on a sturdy hickory, that Robert, in response to Tommy's "chip in," fell to and the two soon notched a base away from the chip. Then Robert, following his cry of "chip!" sunk his axe above the notch, followed by Thomas's axe, that fell in the gash made by Robert's axe, and remained embedded there, for Thomas had suddenly formed a resolution — had reached a mental climax — and forgetting the time and place, allowed Robert's descending axe to fall on his, and throw around a shower of sparks. Tommy, without further ado, and without withdrawing his axe, ceased work and went to the house.

This was the last time (for the next morning Tommy was gone) that these brothers raised an axe together until twenty years had expired, and a sudden thought again stayed the arm of Thomas, and again smashed down the axe of Robert, in the mountains of Colorado, where they were led to see again the long ago, and to remember that they were brothers.

. . . . . .

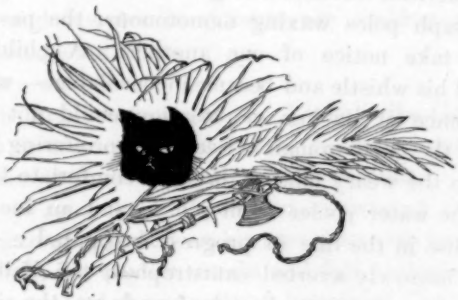
A fledgeling of the Wickersham nest had flown away; it seemed for good. Salathiel said he would return when he had tried his wings. He looked for him soon, as he knew it did not take an age for Tommy to get hungry. Any remarks, however, about Tommy's hunger were kept from Louisa Ellen, who dreamed of nothing else from one baking to another.

Within two years Salathiel was called to his fathers, and his last thoughts were of Tommy.

Louisa Ellen remained with Robert, and gently hoped and prayed for Tommy's return, until six years more had passed, when she, pining for Tommy, died. With her last breath she urged Robert to find Tommy, and Robert promised.

At the expiration of two years more — ten years in all since Tommy departed — Robert sold the farm, and moved West, never ceasing the search for Tommy. Time went by without results until Robert had been in the West ten years, always looking for Tommy.

Then came the dreams, and the meeting that spanned the River of Years, and achieved in a twinkling the realization of Louisa Ellen's gentle hope.



A Pair of Dead-Beats.*

BY JUNA PAPWORTH.

A SOUTH-BOUND train puffed, snorted, and clanged out of the Atlanta depot. With increasing velocity, it effected a circuitous route through clattering freight trains and lumber yards, and proceeding with warning bell through outlying districts of negro shanties, speedily attained an open country of tall pine and scrub palmetto.

The occupants of the Florida Pullman disposed themselves for a long ride. Bags and umbrellas were tossed overhead, hats were replaced by caps, and handkerchiefs tucked thriftily around immaculate collars; sundry windows were raised or lowered, pillows and periodicals produced, and by the time the car was speeding by gaping villages with the pride and privilege of a "fast mail," it had assumed the comfortable aspect of a permanent residence.

The American traveller being a sociable animal, and pine trees and telegraph poles waxing monotonous, the passengers shortly began to take notice of one another. A child in Section 1 swallowed his whistle and became inconsolable — whether from the inconvenience of its loss or location could not be ascertained. However, the good woman in Section 2, proffering her experienced services to the weary mother, brought comfort to the afflicted. A sally to the water cooler from No. 5, and an incidental stumble over a valise in the line of progress instigated a discussion with No. 3 on narrowly averted catastrophes, the Fall of China, and other weighty matters. A pack of cards was the signal for a game of whist by the gentlemen of 4, 6, 7, and 8, respectively. While No. 9, deeming the respectable shelter of a palace car sufficient introduction for all practical purposes, leaned on his pongee elbow, over the aisle, and addressed No. 10.

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"Been attending the exposition, ma'am?"

"Yes," she answered laconically.

"See our fair at Chicago?"

She smiled slightly and shook her head.

"It made Atlanta look like a Brownie by the Colossus of Rhodes."

"So I have heard." She spoke in a soft, low voice that compelled him to exert some effort to catch her remarks. The fact that she in no way aided or abetted the conversation daunted him not a bit. There was, to be sure, a breezy assurance about his whole personality that precluded the idea of his being daunted by anything short of a roaring lion. Certainly the small gentlewoman with the weak voice had no terrors for him, and the possibility that she might consider him "fresh" did not penetrate his genial mind.

"Fairly good crowd at Atlanta," he continued, anxious to concede something: "The railroads issued round-trip excursion tickets for one-fare rates. Do you know, the scalpers are selling these return tickets out of Atlanta for mere songs? "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-aye" would purchase transportation to Timbuctoo."

"Yes," she questioned politely.

"Sure! A fellow has but to be John Smith, or whoever the ticket names, and, if he is put off, he has a good lawsuit against the company. The railroads, I gather, are putting people off every trip, and lawyers in Atlanta are making a business of collecting damage suits."

"Will they win them?"

"It will be interesting to know. I take it the Georgia Legislature is more or less controlled by the railroad interests, and that the people are down on railroads on this account. Popular sentiment is always against the corporation, anyway; a man who would not appropriate an egg, laid on his own door-step by a neighboring hen, would beat his way on a train and feel he had struck a blow for 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.'"

At this point in the monologue, which was conducted in a clear, strong voice, the occupant of Section 11 smiled into her book. Number 11 had maintained that complete unconsciousness of neighbors born of residence in an Eastern metropolis. That she hailed from such metropolis the recent mode of her tailor gown and the smartness of her hat further proclaimed. Number 11 was,

moreover, young and good-looking, with a quiet elegance of person and attire from a well-dressed coil of rich brown hair to a shapely foot in the correct mannish shoe.

"Tickets, please!" The conductor was collecting fares. There was something important about this conductor; you felt, at once, that he would brook no trifling. A tall, lank, Southerner, of somewhat gloomy visage, he scrutinized each ticket with the severity of a magistrate; for one solemn moment, its fate seemed to hang in the balance; then it was punched "with care."

The whist players of Section 6 to a man were subjected to an extra suspicion, owning to their having excursion tickets; but, as their baggage was correctly marked, and letters protruded, conspicuously, from outside pockets, they escaped question. The Chicagoan and lady opposite had straight tickets, while the young lady in Section 11 presented a pass. This was not surprising; she looked like a person whose journey through life was smooth and who travelled on passes. The conductor lost some of his austerity in her presence, and, at the sight of the pass, melted completely. He merely gave it a glance — it being above suspicion — but in that glance, his eye caught a name; he looked surprised, then his face was transformed by the most effusive of smiles. Off came his cap, and he bowed low with true Southern courtesy.

"I am happy to meet you, Mrs. McCarty," he said. "I have the honor of introducing myself; I am Jack Boyd." After this information, evidently intended to produce a sensation, he paused for the effect.

That a sensation was produced there could be no doubt; in fact, several of them had chased each other over the guileless features of Mrs. McCarty. At first, her eyes widened in surprise, then showed a mild alarm; she then, in turn, looked annoyed, relieved, and nonplussed.

"You have heard Charlie speak of Boyd, haven't you? Captain Boyd?" he continued.

For an instant only perplexity reigned in the lady's eyes, than they were lit by a flash of light; she bit her lips in an endeavor to hide something akin to amusement; and a small gloved hand was extended with no lack of cordiality. "Yes, indeed; I am delighted to meet you, Captain Boyd."

"Well, I declare!" he sank on the opposite seat and seemed loath to let go the hand committed to him; "Charlie never mentioned your coming South."

"He did not know I was coming — that is — I left home — rather unexpectedly," she answered, somewhat incoherently.

"To think of you-all being on my train! Charlie said he had married a stunning girl, but 'Love is blind,' you know, and I never reckoned — Where's the baby?" he broke off suddenly; but the train slowed down for a station, so he excused himself with a "see you later."

In a few moments he was back, and fell into his former seat with an assurance warranted by a mutual love for "Charlie." "There's going to be some fun in a minute," he leaned over and whispered. "That fellow across the aisle has a scalper's ticket; I have inside information about him, and I am going to put him off."

She looked startled, and bent an inquiring glance toward Section 12. She saw a young man reading a voluminous newspaper; he seemed unconscious of brewing trouble.

"You know Charlie sent me your photograph in your wedding dress" — the little matter of throwing a gentleman off the train could evidently wait — "but I never got it."

She caught her breath.

"Going to Florida?"

"Yes."

"But where is Geraldine?"

"Geraldine? Why, — Geraldine is very busy this winter."

"Busy? Shaking rattle boxes and playing with her toes?"

She looked confused. "You mean the baby? I thought you referred to the aunt she was named for. The baby is with her grandmother."

"Oh! You modern mothers!!!" He shook a playful finger at her.

She blushed furiously.

"By the way, how is The General?"

"Quite well, thank you," she replied cheerfully.

"The General never had any use for me; he used to get furious when I came around."

"He is a little hasty, sometimes, toward every one," she apologized.

The conductor laughed heartily. "Hasty is good! He was a little too hasty the time he caught my finger." He displayed a curious scar above the nail of the right forefinger, which she examined with interest, and then, as she was expected to say something, she ventured in the light of this revelation. "The General ran away last week."

"RAN! Can he do that?" He threw back his head and bellowed at the idea. "He had several hours start, didn't he?"

"Well, for his age, he can make first-rate time." This remark, though nicely calculated to fit early youth or tottering senility, still seemed to have something amiss.

"Oh, The General is in his prime yet; he has not been in the family more than fifty years or so."

Someway, The General suddenly seemed to lose interest for her, and she fell to musing on the longevity of crocodiles.

"Does he swear as badly as ever?"

"For a parrot with an uncertain early training," she replied, with recovered animation, "he might be more profane."

The train slackened speed and, rising with a nod, as who should say: "I go, but I will return," he left the car. Mrs. McCarty cast a look of friendly interest across the aisle; but her neighbor had such an air of easy confidence that her glance contained more of appeal than commiseration.

When the conductor returned he proceeded at once, with a knowing look at Mrs. McCarty, to ask No. 12 for his ticket.

"Are you J. B. Johnson?" This was in a tone very different from the one he had used to her.

"I go by that name," said No. 12, pleasantly.

"I will have to have some further assurance of that than your word."

Mr. Johnson looked grieved, but put down his paper good-naturedly. "Must have left my letters in my other coat," he observed complacently, after a fruitless search of his pockets.

The conductor laughed ominously. "You will have to be identified someway," he insisted.

"Certainly!" Mr. Johnson leaned over and waved his hand, with happily placed confidence, in the direction of the Chicagoan: "This gentleman will identify me."

"Sure!" exclaimed the individual so unexpectedly appealed to; "He is J. B. Johnson."

"How long have you known that?" sarcastically.

"About ten years, — hey, Jim?"

Jim opined it had been about that long, and resumed his paper as though the subject were closed, amid laughter throughout the car.

"One identification don't go," said the flushed conductor.

As by one simultaneous impulse, the whist players of No. 6 were on their feet and stalking down the aisle. "Is it Jim Johnson you want identified?" said the first, "I thought everybody on the road knew Jim." He shook hands heartily.

"Didn't see you, my boy," said the second.

"Thought there was something familiar about the name, Johnson," chimed in the third. The last greeting was lost in the general uproar; while the little girl from No. 1 slipped off the Chicagoan's knee, came timidly forward, and, with an encouraging nod from him, piped in a clear treble: "How de do, Uncle Jim?"

The door slammed on the irate conductor, and Mr. Johnson touched the button.

His passengers were quite generally indulging in refreshing beverages, and the children were smeared with candy, when the captain returned. There was trouble in his eye, and he addressed the car in stentorian tones.

"Will the gentlemen who have so kindly identified this person as J. B. Johnson now hear the description of J. B. Johnson furnished by the general passenger agent, who knows the party personally. "Small blonde woman," he read impressively, "yellow hair, blue eyes, five feet two and weighs one hundred and ten pounds." He folded his arms and confronted Mr. Johnson like an avenging nemesis. "What have you to say to that, sir?"

"The description flatters me a little, I fear," said that gentleman, modestly, "but it seems all right."

"Why! Great Shade of Munchausen!! This is a woman!"

"Yes," he acquiesced placidly, "I am *the new woman.*"

The car was indecently hilarious.

"You will have to pay your fare, sir."

"Now, I give you my word I have paid my fare once, otherwise I would take great pleasure in obliging you." Nothing could be more courteous than his tone.

"Get your witnesses for your lawsuit, then; off you-all go at the next station."

"Please don't worry about a damage suit," said Johnson sweetly, "I would never cause trouble for a man doing his duty, and I can quite see, from your point of view, that you are obliged to be aggressive."

Boyd was the bigger man and his southern pride and anger were aroused; but certain alert movements of his antagonist — an erect carriage of the head and lithe figure — suggested a training that gave him "pause." He glanced at Mrs. McCarty. That discreet lady was giving her attention to palm-leaf fans with an absorption that deepened with each ten million passed. Boyd bolted, but returned almost immediately with two stalwart brakemen, who proceeded to lay hands on "the new woman" in no very respectful style.

What would have occurred then will never be known, for an unlooked-for interruption occurred. Mrs. McCarty rose suddenly and grasped the conductor's arm.

"Captain Boyd," she said, with considerable dignity, "this joke has gone far enough; I can identify Mr. Johnson myself." Her tone, while gracious and polite, was final and admitted of no dispute. "I fear you will be terribly angry," she faltered apologetically, "but it was all so funny" — she laughed a trifle hysterically — "that I helped the joke along. I do not want him actually put off, however," she added, not without crimsoning, "because Charlie put me — in — his care — on the journey."

"Back to the woods, boys," he roared to the brakemen. "Madam," he bowed low, "the word of C. P. McCarty's wife is law on this train." With a purple face, vanished the conductor, to appear in that car no more that day.

Mrs. McCarty and Mr. Johnson stood confronting one another. Her eyes held an embarrassed appeal, and his, wonder, amusement and admiration. "Why did you do it?" he demanded sternly.

"I could not see you put off."

"Why not? I deserved it."

"H-u-s-h," she warned, for he appeared oblivious to the others.

"I am a fraud, a rogue," he continued regardless, "and utterly beneath your notice."

"Don't," she wailed in a stage whisper. "The more you abuse yourself the more culpable you make me feel. You see I am as gigantic a fraud as yourself. I am not Mrs. Charlie McCarty at all. I never even saw Charlie." She threw out both hands in the utter self-abasement of the confession. The other fraud stared incredulously. Then they both laughed, a laugh which bridged, with one span, a sea of formality.

Now, they could not stand in the aisle, and there was so much she wanted to explain. She hesitated an instant, then waved him to the seat lately occupied by the conductor, where he said:

"I cannot adequately express my obligation to you."

"There is no obligation; I could not ride on guiltily after you were put off; this is but the honor that obtains among thieves. Besides, it is necessary to rid myself of this conductor; he took me for a board of information on parrots and babies; one could not live up to it. "Oh dear!" she sighed tragically. "How the first false step entails an endless train of guilt. I merely availed myself of this pass, and then needs must tell more falsehoods than my conscience can ever aquit; and now, here I am talking to you. *Facilis est descensus Averni.*"

"Thank you."

"But we have not been introduced." In her conventional code this was the culmination of her crimes.

He prepared to retire to his own section.

"Don't go," she pleaded inconsistently.

He sat down.

"If he was not such a gentleman," she mused, "but he is so respectful, and does not in the least presume upon my public avowal of friendship, that I fear he might think I was conceited and silly enough to think — that he might think —" she lost herself in the ramifications of what he might think. Mrs. McCarty, she told him, was a school friend whom she met quite by accident at the Exposition. Her husband was a conductor on the L. & N. Road and, as she had abandoned her trip farther South, she urged her friend to use her pass.

On his part, he explained that he had actually paid full price for his ticket to the little blonde woman, just to accommodate; but he claimed no extenuating circumstances on this account. Lunch was ordered for two, and he became quite gay when she removed her left glove and disclosed no band of gold entrammelling the third finger. It transpired that her name was Pauline Holland, her home New York, and that she expected to meet in Jacksonville an uncle and aunt returning from Cuba. He was from Hartford, Connecticut; his name, Richard Clifford; and he was bound for a sporting trip down the Indian River.

The train was belated and reached Jacksonville quite after dark. To Miss Holland's consternation, no uncle nor aunt were at the station to meet her. Mr. Clifford, before boarding his train for the east coast, established her in a delapidated vehicle termed "carriage" by the profession of shabby darkies infesting the station. He handed her a card bearing his addresses for the winter, and a permanent one, and stated that he was at her service "so long as they both should live." Should she ever "be in trouble or need a friend," he told her earnestly, he would "come at her bidding, though land and seas divide." "The winds would be left behind in the speed of his desire."

She had a curious sense of loss as he raised his hat and strode away through the electric light. Of course she would never send for him, a perfect stranger — that was absurd. And, of course, she would never see him again. They were "ships that pass in the night" — a friendly greeting; a few waves of thought that reach out and intermingle; and then, to cross each other's path no more in life's vast ocean. That was all, of course. And yet — she felt unaccountably depressed. She was not rendered less forlorn by the telegram awaiting her at the hotel.

ABOARD the MASCOT, PORT TAMPA, FLA.
November 27, 1895.

MISS PAULINE HOLLAND:—

Yellow fever aboard. Quarantined 20 days. Await us at Jacksonville.

J. P. HOLLAND.

As the tourist season had not begun, the fashionable hotels of the city were closed, and the Hollands had selected for their sojourn a small, unpretentious hostelry. The office being some-

thing of a ladies' parlor as well, Miss Holland stepped boldly to the desk and registered. Then, explaining the detention of her friends, she endorsed a draft on New York for one hundred dollars, which the proprietor obligingly cashed.

As she turned away and followed the shambling porter and her dress suit case to her room, she failed to observe a man point her out to a group in the office; and failed, also, to see him examine the register with evident astonishment. What she did see, however, a little later, at the supper table, and which suddenly robbed that repast of its anticipated enjoyment, was, peering at her, under a pair of bushy brows, not ten feet away, — the amused, triumphant, and somewhat malicious eyes of "the conductor."

That night a message sped over the wire to St. Augustine to Richard Clifford, signed Pauline Holland, saying: "In trouble."

There were several things for him to do when he arrived in the morning. Miss Holland told of her predicament with her usual composure, and then, feeling there was no longer occasion for effort on her part, she promptly fainted away. There was a doctor to summon and a nurse to install. There was the travelling salesman to thank, who, displaying more perspicacity than the hotel proprietor, had proffered bail, and saved Miss Holland a night in the station house. There was the proprietor himself to interview, and persuade to withdraw his charge of forgery; which he readily agreed to do when Clifford cashed the draft. Together they sought the city magistrate and asked him to dismiss the case. That official was not to be persuaded, however. A Court of Justice, he held, was not a collecting agency. The fact that a third party paid the money made the forger none the less guilty. The party had confessed she bore another name than the one signed. The case would have to come up in its regular order. "Could Mr. Clifford identify the party as Pauline Holland?" Alas, it was with mortification that Clifford remembered he could claim an acquaintance of but twenty-four hours, during which time she had borne two names, to which he had but her word she was entitled.

Captain Boyd, it was ascertained, had left town; he had disappeared the night before, after introducing Mrs. McCarty to a dozen persons. Clifford mailed the draft to the New York bank with instructions to wire the authenticity of the signature. He

then took a train for Atlanta, for which destination he provided himself with a straight, full-priced, *bona-fide*, gilt-edged, irreproachable, unimpeachable ticket.

"I suppose you are aware that your wife loaned her pass to Jacksonville to Miss Holland." Clifford addressed Captain C. P. McCarty, whom he had traced to the exposition by a convention of Railway Conductors. He found him on a promenade, in the act of haranguing a crowd of blue-coats on the obligation of employees to work only for the interests of the corporation.

"The devil, she did!" said McCarty, with far from a good grace. In fact, to Clifford's surprise, the story of Miss Holland's trouble did not appeal to McCarty so much as the consequences to himself, should the affair be known. He could be neither urged nor coerced into taking any action. Even the contemplation of his own wife's position failed to move him.

"Consider," reminded Clifford, "Mrs. McCarty is now held to be a frisky young matron off on — a kind — of toot."

"Damn it! Let her toot!" This was not nice, but Charlie was mad. "She will toot all right if I lose my job," he affirmed.

Clifford, all undismayed, was casting about for new inspiration, when Good Fortune, ever enamoured of the cheerful and sanguine, smiled lovingly upon him. In the distance arose the crescendo strains of martial music, while from surrounding buildings, like disturbed bees, swarmed sightseers to view the parade of Sousa and his popular band. Two conductors came out of the transportation building, and from the opposite way, rapidly pushing a go-cart, hastened a plump young matron. The conductors and the plump young matron spied McCarty and made for him simultaneously. She stood on her toes for a kiss, while the occupant of the go-cart extended a pair of chubby arms, and kicked and squirmed and gurgled with unmistakable glee.

"Good morning, Captain Ross," to one of the conductors, "Can't 'oo frow 'im a kith, darlin'? — Doesn't she look like Charlie?"

There was no denying that the baby did look like Charlie. As for Charlie, he was greeting the second conductor in an embarrassed manner that was immaterial, as that individual was wholly occupied with the woman and baby, whom he regarded with a peculiar expression. He was, of course, Charlie's old friend, Jack Boyd.

Charlie surrendered. He agreed to swear to anything if Boyd would not make his plurality of wives a convention issue.

Boyd, himself, was in high spirits, having a rôle more to his liking. By a tacit understanding, neither he nor Clifford mentioned their former acquaintance. He expressed his regrets for having caused Miss Holland trouble; he did not know she had cashed a draft. "She is the cleverest girl I ever ran across," he declared to the bunch of land captains who had collected to hear the fun. "First she was Mrs. McCarty; then, when I addressed her at the hotel under the impression she was — out for a good time — you know, she claimed to be Miss Holland; and when she had almost convinced me of this, she turned around and satisfied me all over again that she was Mrs. McCarty. I would credit that girl with being the Queen of Sheba."

"What business have you addressing my wife, if she is out for 'a good time'?" demanded McCarty; and Boyd subsided under the laughter at his expense.

"It was the fear of causing Mr. McCarty trouble," explained Clifford, "that induced Miss Holland to assume his name a second time. And, moreover, she stoutly maintained it, after she found the house full of railroad people, in the face of serious consequences to herself. It was at her request that I came to see Mr. McCarty before taking any other steps in her behalf." Clifford had been betrayed into warm enthusiasm.

"You seem to take a great interest in the young lady, a relative, I presume?" suggested Ross; and the young man, taken unawares, colored and could find no suitable answer. They all laughed, and all agreed to stand by McCarty and see him through. And the band played "El Capitan."

Clifford returned to Jacksonville on Boyd's train, and together they presented overwhelming evidence in Miss Holland's favor, and her case was dismissed.

The elder Hollands reached Jacksonville the following day, the yellow fever proving to have been merely typhoid malaria. They expressed themselves duly grateful for Mr. Clifford's kindness after "Pauline's fooling escapade," and all went to St. Augustine together.

Mr. Holland took such a fancy to "Dick," as he called Richard,

that he urged him not to abandon him to the exclusive society of the ladies, but to postpone his trip down the river. That Dick was persuaded aroused no suspicions in his breast. Was he not one of "the boys"? If Mrs. Holland had any misgivings as to the sufficiency of her lord's charms, she kept her own counsel.

One night, several weeks after our party had located in the oldest city in the Union, — and the youngest, — Dick and Pauline sat upon the sea-wall. A gentle surf splashed at their feet and broke along the wall like distant thunder. A breeze, salt-laden, was as balmy as summer, and a full golden orb turned a pathway of waves into shimmering silver. Distinct and impressive rose the gray, gloomy form of old Spanish Fort Marion, for whose impenetrable walls of amalgamated shell countless millions of coquinos had lived and died. The moonlight could be felt and was intoxicating. They sat bewitched and inspired.

"Do you know," she broke the spell at last, "I have a queer guilty feeling whenever I sign my name, after the notoriety it obtained in Jacksonville."

"Like it?" he insinuated.

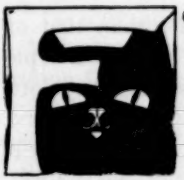
"Like it? Notoriety?" Her tone expressed disgust and her eyes flashed the scorn merited, but she lowered them quickly upon meeting the look in his, and attempted to rise hastily. "You are on my frock, Mr. Clifford."

Dick apologized, but failed to release her. And then, as she could not dodge the issue, he proceeded to point out how easily he could fix the matter of which she complained. There was still one name she had not tried, he reminded her, and he eloquently urged its speedy adoption.

With the splendor of the moon, stars, and sea, and all the glory of a tropical night, lending magic to a pair of fine eyes, we believe he finally convinced her of the expediency of this move.

The Mansion of Forgetfulness.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



OUR months after the salt waves had laid at his feet the cold form of his Love, came the news that Herbert Munson was the possessor of a startling secret. He had, it was stated, discovered a Purple Ray that would wither and destroy certain human cells of memory without injury or danger to neighboring cells. This rumor was followed by the still more amazing report that Munson had erected the Mansion of Forgetfulness, to which all who would free their minds of a hopeless passion might repair, and in one brief hour, *forget*.

And, sure enough, here they came — those who loved not wisely but too well, those who loved deeply but hopelessly, and those who loved the Dead and could endure their grief no longer — and the Purple Ray "plucked from the memory its rooted sorrow" and they went forth from the Mansion of Forgetfulness unscarred and fancy-free.

Yet he who showed others how to forget would not himself forget. It was agony to know that she was dead, and he would never see her face again, yet he shrank from forgetfulness as the soul shrinks from oblivion. Try as he would, he could not drag himself from the haunted halls of memory, though he remembered that the world without was wonderfully fair, and other women, perhaps as lovely as she, were waiting there to love and be loved. No! Let others forget, he would not! Not that he lived in hope, for had he not kissed the salt foam from her dead face? But that memory was all that remained of a Love who was no more.

He watched them come and go — watched the many, ah, too many, pilgrims arrive with sorrowful, love-haunted faces, but

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depart with unconcerned, care-free looks, and at times he feared that his philanthropy was a sacrilege. There seemed something unholy in this sudden transmutation of grief into gladness — this swift thrusting aside of the tragic presence of sorrow — yet they had chosen of their own free will to forget a hopeless passion, and they could now return whence they came and love again, more wisely if less deeply.

Some came, thinking to blot out other memories than that of a hopeless love — memories of sin and crime — but the Purple Ray would not be thwarted to such base purposes, and they left, abashed and disappointed.

It was in winter, when the snow was changed to crystal as it fell upon the walls and cornices of the beautiful marble edifice, or piled itself in drifts of sifted diamonds against the stained glass windows, when a lady came alone across the vales and entered the broad gateway of the Mansion of Forgetfulness.

Something in her manner — perhaps her agitated hesitation at the portals — moved the master to accost her.

"Kind friend," he said, "were it not better to remember what you now seek to forget?" As he spoke he drew closer about his face the cowl he wore to conceal his identity from the merely curious.

A sigh was the only immediate answer, as the pilgrim leaned wearily against a marble pillar. Then came the low spoken words:

"Perhaps I may only half forget. I would remember, yet not remember so acutely."

"No, you will wholly forget. The Purple Ray is oblivion itself."

"Ah, well, better I kill these painful memories than break my heart!"

"Then, if it must be so, enter and forget."

"Show me the way and let me go quickly," was the plea of the veiled lady. "I have come far, and the worst is only a few steps farther on."

"Come, then!" and the master led the way to the room of the Purple Ray.

An hour passed, when the door was opened and the veiled

visitor came forth and descended the broad stairway. She moved quickly and lightly, and at the foot of the stairs she laughed musically as she again met the master.

"Have you forgotten?" he asked.

"Forgotten! I know that I have forgotten something, else why am I here, yet I do not know what I have forgotten."

"So they all say!"

A flush of rosy light shone from a slender window overhead, haloing the pilgrim like a saint.

"How beautiful everything is!" she exclaimed. "Why do I wear this veil? I will no longer!"

So saying, she loosened it, disclosing a face young and exquisitely fair. The man shrank back as if pierced by a bolt.

"My God, it is her spirit!" he gasped.

"No, no!" protested the visitor. "I am not a spirit, and I fear I am too, too human."

"You are Morella!" whispered the man, staring before him like one peering through intense darkness.

"I am. Who are you that you ask?"

"Morella! I thought you dead! I kissed you for dead and then the waves swept me away and I saw you no more."

"Some fishermen once found me on a sandy beach, where they said I had fainted. Who are you?"

The man drew back his cowl. "Look!" There was no light of recognition in the other's eyes. "My God! the Ray has blotted out all memory!"

"Pray tell me what you mean, and let me go," came the passionless words.

A groan was the only reply, and the man hid his face in his hands.

"You seem to know what I have forgotten. Has it aught to do with you?"

"O Morella, it were better that I thought you dead than to know that you have forgotten! Do you not recall our betrothal? See, you have the ring upon your hand! Does it not awaken one recollection of other days?"

The girl gazed blankly at the ring on her hand, and shook her head.

"Has the Ray blotted out every fair memory! Have you returned to life only to forget! Try to think, dearest: Do you not remember that day in Naples when we pledged eternal love for one another?"

"I remember no betrothal." A deep look of pity came into the speaker's eyes when she saw the pain her words had caused. "If remembrance is so sad, why do you not also forget?"

"My love!" he groaned, "you are making the world darker to me than to dying eyes! You ask me to forget! You!"

"You forget, that I have forgotten."

The man groaned in utter anguish.

As she turned to go he stayed her by a gentle touch. *"Wait here while I, too, go and kill that memory!"*

He dragged himself up the broad stairway, looking back once when he had reached the landing, then turned and staggered towards the room of the Purple Ray.

The Last 50 cents in the World

A lady in the enthusiasm of regained health and old-time joy, writes:

"If I had only 50 cents left in the world, I'll tell you how I would invest it: Postum, 25 cents; Grape-Nuts, 15 cents; cream, 10 cents, and I'd live like a queen while it lasted.

"Postum has done more for me in building up my health and strengthening my nerves than all the medicines I've taken in the 45 years of my life.

"I suffered about 20 years of that time with nervous sick-headache often spending 3 days of each week in bed. If I went out one day, I'd likely spend the next in bed—so nervous, life was not altogether happy as one can imagine.

"Seven years ago I left off coffee and commenced drinking Postum Food Coffee. My strength quickly returned and nervousness and headaches became a thing of the past.

"If people tell me they don't like Postum, I nearly always find they have not boiled it long enough, for it is surely the ideal drink when made right, and is full of wholesome goodness."

"There's a Reason" for

POSTUM

Postum Cereal Co., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich., U. S. A.